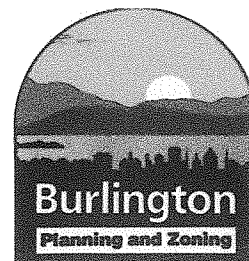


Department of Planning and Zoning

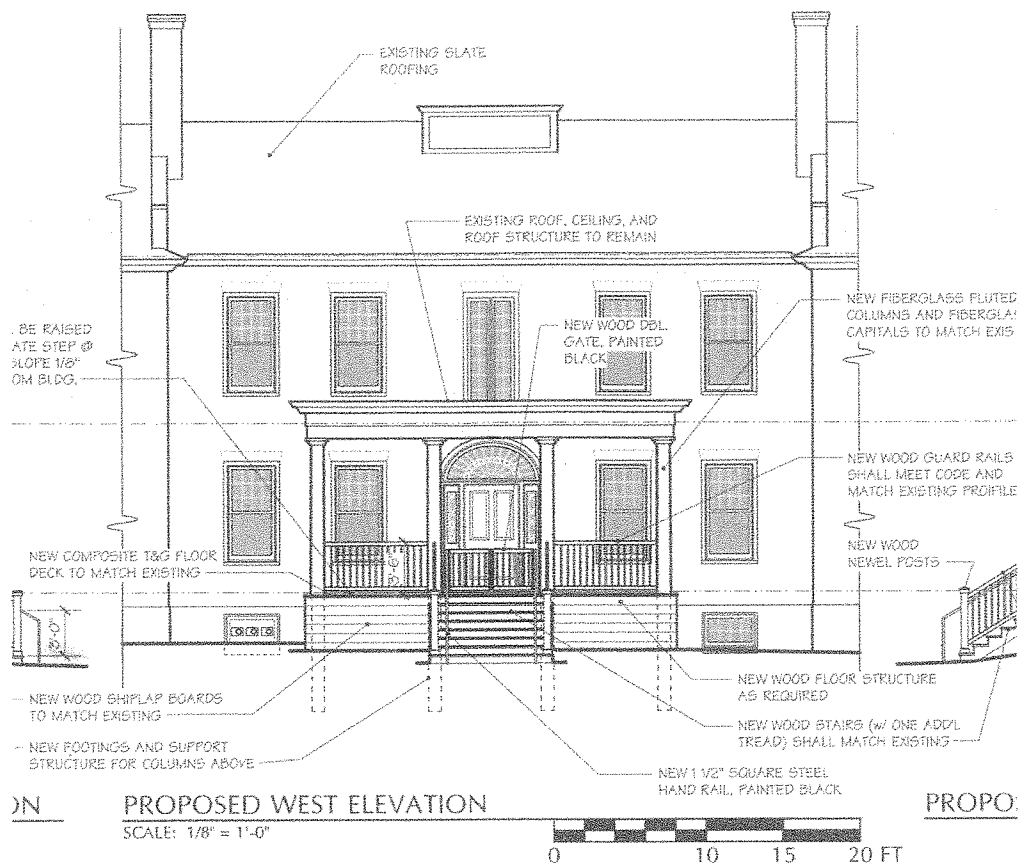
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Nic Anderson, Zoning Clerk
Elsie Tillotson, Department Secretary



MEMORANDUM

To: The Design Advisory Board
From: Mary O'Neil, AICP, Senior Planner
RE: ZP 14-0155CA, 272 Church Street
Date: August 27, 2013



File: ZP 14-0155CA

Location: 272 Church Street; Converse Home

Zone: RM **Ward:** 6

Date application accepted: August 8, 2013

Applicant/ Owner: Duncan-Wisniewski Architecture / The Converse Home

Request: Replacement of front porch railings, columns, floor and steps.

Background:

- **Non Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements;** Construction of arbor. May 2013.

The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities. For accessibility information call 865-7188 (for TTY users 865-7142).

- **Zoning Permit 13-0867SN**; Install new freestanding sign for the Converse Home. Approved April 2013.
- **Zoning Permit 12-1283CA**; Change of use from convalescent/nursing home to assisted living. No building or site changes proposed. Approved July, 2012.
- **Zoning Permit 11-0881CA**; Change of use from convalescent/nursing home to assisted living. No building or site changes proposed. Approved May, 2011. Permit relinquished/expired. June 2012.
- **Zoning Permit 06-883FC**; remove existing fence along Adams Street and a portion along the east property line; replace with new 48" black painted aluminum. Small section of new sidewalk connects to public sidewalk. Approved July, 2006.
- **Zoning Permit 04-292**; renovation of existing building and proposed addition, increasing number of units from 27 to 67. Conditional use review for major impact development. Approved November 2003.
- **Zoning Permit 99-091/COA 094-101D**; expand parking area for the existing convalescent home. No change to structure or number of beds. Approved August 1998.
- **Zoning Permit 96-365**; fenestration and door changes to the south and east elevations of the existing Converse Home. Approved March 1996.
- **Zoning Permit 96-262 / COA 094-101C**; Construct suspended one story insulated bridge between the existing porch and door 17' away on the rear of the Converse Home. Proposal includes removing the glass block in-fill on the one story south elevation, installing two windows to match existing and in-filling with wood clapboard siding. Approved November 1995.
- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements**; Interior renovations. October 1995.
- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements**; Interior modifications. September 1995.
- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements**, Renovation of interior. October 1994.
- **Zoning Permit 95-131 / COA 094-101B**; amend previously approved rear two story elevator tower to smaller footprint of approximately 7.5' x 10.5', extending to just below the existing roof line of the Converse Home and covered in painted clapboard siding. Structure is on the City, State and National lists of historic buildings and is a contributor within the Battery/King Streets Historic District. Approved September 1994.
- **Zoning Permit 95-072 / COA 094-101A**; amend previously approved rear two story elevator and stair tower for the existing Converse Home from a brick façade to wood clapboard siding. Size and massing remain as originally approved. Structure is on the City, State and National lists of historic buildings and is a contributor within the Battery/King Streets Historic District. Approved August 1994.
- **Non-Applicability of Zoning Permit Requirements**; Interior renovation, September 1994.

- **Zoning Permit 94-455 / COA 094-101;** Construction of a rear two story elevator and stair tower for the existing Converse Home. Approved May 1994.
- **Zoning Permit 78-12;** Renovation for Director's residence; expand into storage area 800 sf. Zone: Historic Site. Approved March 1978.
- **Zoning Permit** to erect a 3' x 26' roof over the stairs on the west side of the building. Approved December 1974.

Overview: The applicant wishes to address repairs to the front entry porch, with a new wood floor structure, raising the deck +/- 4 ½" to eliminate the step at the front door. The application comes before the DAB as the request includes replacement of the existing, fluted wood columns with fiberglass; new composite tongue and groove decking, and 42" full rise railings. As noted in permit history, the Converse Home is one of the oldest structures in the City, and within the **Battery/King Street Historic District**. Therefore, Section 5.4.8 applies.

PART 1: LAND DIVISION DESIGN STANDARDS

Not applicable.

PART 2: SITE PLAN DESIGN STANDARDS

Sec. 6.2.2 Review Standards

(a) Protection of Important Natural Features:

No change.

(b) Topographical Alterations:

None proposed.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

No change.

(d) Protection of Important Cultural Resources:

*Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Archeological sites likely to yield information important to the city's or the region's pre-history or history shall be evaluated, documented, and avoided whenever feasible. Where the proposed development involves sites listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable development and design standards pursuant to **Sec. 5.4.8(b)**.*

See Section 5.4.8, below.

(e) Supporting the Use of Renewable Energy Resources:

Not applicable.

(f) Brownfield Sites:

Not applicable.

(g) Provide for nature's events:

The replacement of the porch will continue its service as a shelter from inclement weather, and to provide a restful place to enjoy the landscape within shade.

(h) Building Location and Orientation:

No change.

(i) Vehicular Access:

No change.

(j) Pedestrian Access:

No change.

(k) Accessibility for the Handicapped:

Raising the porch 4 ½" will eliminate the step between the porch and the front door, a significant positive alteration for the residents of the assisted living community.

(l) Parking and Circulation:

No change.

(m) Landscaping and Fences:

No change.

(n) Public Plazas and Open Space:

No change.

(o) Outdoor Lighting:

No change included within the application.

(p) Integrate infrastructure into the design:

No change identified.

PART 3: ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STANDARDS

Sec. 6.3.2 Review Standards

(a) Relate development to its environment:

1. Massing, Height and Scale:

The replacement porch is proposed on the same footprint as existing. The floor decking is proposed to be raised approximately 4 ½" to eliminate the step into the front entry. Although this will require another new step/riser, it is not likely to be noticeable.

2. Roofs and Rooflines.

Existing roof, ceiling and roof structure are proposed to be retained.

3. Building Openings

No change.

(b) Protection of Important Architectural Resources:

*Burlington's architectural and cultural heritage shall be protected through sensitive and respectful redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill. Where the proposed development involves buildings listed or eligible for listing on a state or national register of historic places, the applicant shall meet the applicable **development and design standards pursuant to Sec. 5.4.8.** The introduction of new buildings to a historic district listed on a state or national register of historic places shall make every effort to be compatible with nearby historic buildings.*

See Section 5.4.8, below.

(c) Protection of Important Public Views:

No change.

(d) Provide an active and inviting street edge:

This front porch is an enduring amenity to the Converse Home, and its replacement will continue its service as a welcoming, functional enhancement to the property.

(e) Quality of materials:

All development shall maximize the use of highly durable building materials that extend the life cycle of the building, and reduce maintenance, waste, and environmental impacts. Such materials are particularly important in certain highly trafficked locations such as along major streets, sidewalks, loading areas, and driveways. Efforts to incorporate the use of recycled content materials and building materials and products that are extracted and/or manufactured within the region are highly encouraged.

*Owners of historic structures are encouraged to consult with an architectural historian in order to determine the most appropriate repair, restoration or replacement of historic building materials as outlined by **the requirements of Art 5, Sec. 5.4.8.***

The crux of the request and reason for deferral to the Design Advisory Board is the appropriateness of composite/modern materials for replacement components on this significant building. The applicant contends that fiberglass columns will far outlast replacement wooden columns, although matching the shape and flute contour to the originals may be a challenge. Similarly, decking material is proposed to be a composite rather than traditional wood tongue and groove. The architect has experience working with historic structures, and therefore his firm's engagement meets the consultation recommendation in the last paragraph of this standard.

"Quality of materials" and "durability" standards are challenging when they overlap review of the appropriateness in historic context. This is an extremely historically sensitive building; the engraving from 1845 testament to the early porch. Attentive examination of its care and rehabilitative treatment is therefore worthwhile.

See Section 5.4.8, below.

(f) Reduce energy utilization:

Not applicable.

(g) Make advertising features complementary to the site:

Not applicable.

(h) Integrate infrastructure into the building design:

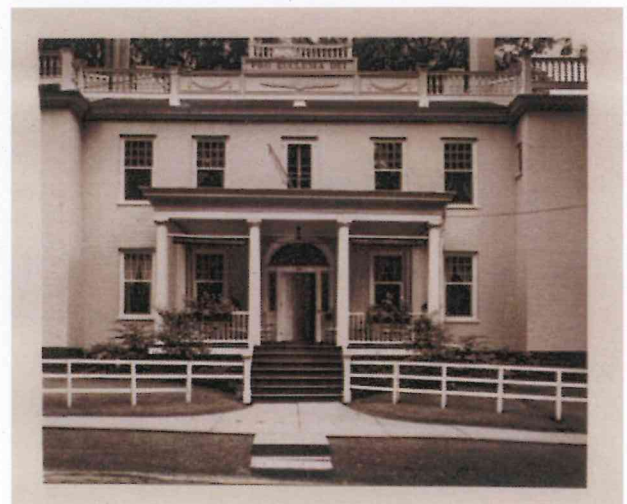
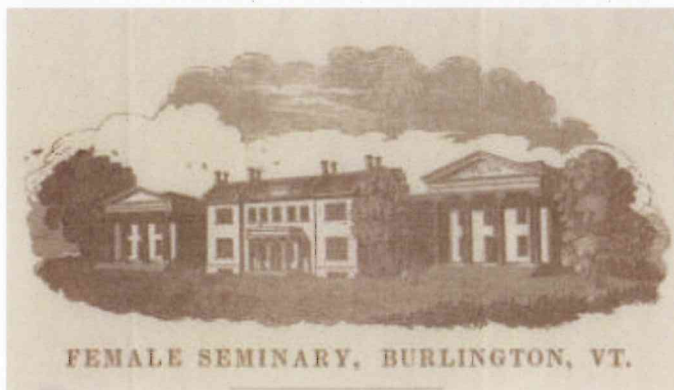
Not applicable.

(i) Make spaces secure and safe:

The application proposes full rise 42” railings to meet life safety codes for barrier railings. Typically alternative methods to meet the barrier requirement are employed when addressing historic porches: Installation of a second rail at the 42” height above the existing porch railing, or installation of an entire secondary railing system behind the historic rail, made of finer gauge wrought iron and painted a dark color to “disappear” behind the historic porch rail.

The applicant contends that these railings are not historic (although may be more than 50 years old.) The existing handrail itself is rounded, and more modern in contour. New wood guard rails are proposed, however rising to the full barrier requirement of 42”.

Historic engravings and photos show the porch; first without railings (1845) and then with (1954.)



The most appropriate solution for porch railing replacement height is sought from this board.

Sec. 5.4.8 Historic Buildings and Sites

The City seeks to preserve, maintain, and enhance those aspects of the city having historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural merit. Specifically, these regulations seek to achieve the following goals:

To preserve, maintain and enhance Burlington's historic character, scale, architectural integrity, and cultural resources;

To foster the preservation of Burlington's historic and cultural resources as part of an attractive, vibrant, and livable community in which to live, work and visit;

To promote a sense of community based on understanding the city's historic growth and development, and maintaining the city's sense of place by protecting its historic and cultural resources; and,

To promote the adaptive re-use of historic buildings and sites.

(a) Applicability:

These regulations shall apply to all buildings and sites in the city that are listed, or eligible for listing, on the State or National Register of Historic Places.

The Converse Home (Harrington-Hopkins House; 1800, 1830-35.) is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places within the **Battery Street King Street Historic District**.

(b) Standards and Guidelines:

1. *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

The use is not proposed to change.

2. *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

While spatial relationships are not proposed to change, the proposed material change to the columns and decking (fiberglass, composite decking) will diminish the historic integrity of the porch. Appropriate treatment (per the *Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*) is first, repair; then replacement with in kind materials. The Standards continue to state:

Repair will also generally include the limited replacement in kind – or with compatible substitute material – of those extensively deteriorated or missing parts of repeated features where there are surviving prototypes such as balustrades, cornices, entablature, columns, sidelight, and stairs.¹

Not recommended:

Using a substitute material for the replacement parts that do not convey the visual appearance of the surviving parts of the entrance and porch or that is physically or chemically incompatible.²

Examination today is of the appropriateness to use substitute material, whether the request meets the standard *protected through sensitive and respectful rehabilitation*, and the visual compatibility of each material proposed. The most appropriate replacement option, however, favors the existing material, and replacement of these features with wood would still constitute a repair.

3. *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

¹ Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995). 85.

² Ibid.

No conjectural features are proposed. Not applicable.

4. *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

It is clear from visual examination that the porch columns have previously been repaired. This documents the on-going maintenance (and weather exposure) of these exterior components, and the vigilance and effort required to maintain them in good repair.

5. *Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.*

Again, a challenge. The porch columns are most significant, and evident in the earliest engravings of the entrance porch. Their craftsmanship (and visible repair) are distinctive both in their material, craftsmanship, and construction. The applicant has expressed that he is not completely confident that they may be replaced accurately in fiberglass to match the existing contours of the fluting; but believes consideration of a substitute fiberglass replacement will best serve the property due to its anticipated greater durability. This is a similar argument for consideration of substitute material for the porch decking. Both components receive full exposure to extreme weather. The significance of the historic porch, the desire to maintain the integrity of the original materials as well as the visual character of the porch, and the unknown ability to match the existing flute contours suggests to staff that adherence to traditional replacement-in-kind standards most appropriate.

6. *Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials recognizing that new technologies may provide an appropriate alternative in order to adapt to ever changing conditions and provide for an efficient contemporary use. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.*

The Design Advisory Board is asked to weigh-in on the appropriateness of proposed replacement materials for the columns and porch decking, assessing whether the new materials are an appropriate alternative in this context. Staff favors retention of traditional materials for the above noted reasons, with the strictest application of this standard given the historic significance of the building.

7. *Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.*

Not applicable.

8. *Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.*

Not applicable.

9. *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.*

Historic materials (columns, decking) are proposed to be replaced with new, composite materials. It is possible that contours on the columns may be different from existing; however these should not read as “new” but ideally visually replicate the existing. Making a

distinction in column replacement by choosing a different structural contour would be stepping away from the integrity of the original porch feature.

It is noted that historic photographs illustrate more ornate capitals than are proposed in fiberglass. A site visit informs that the ornate capitals are no longer extant. It is not known when this change was made and the capitals replaced. The proposed fiberglass replacement may be a sufficiently visual replica in this context.

10. *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

The effort is rehabilitative, and not intended to introduce new construction/additions to the historic structure. If removed, the “essential” form and integrity of the entire historic property would remain intact but be impaired to a minor degree.

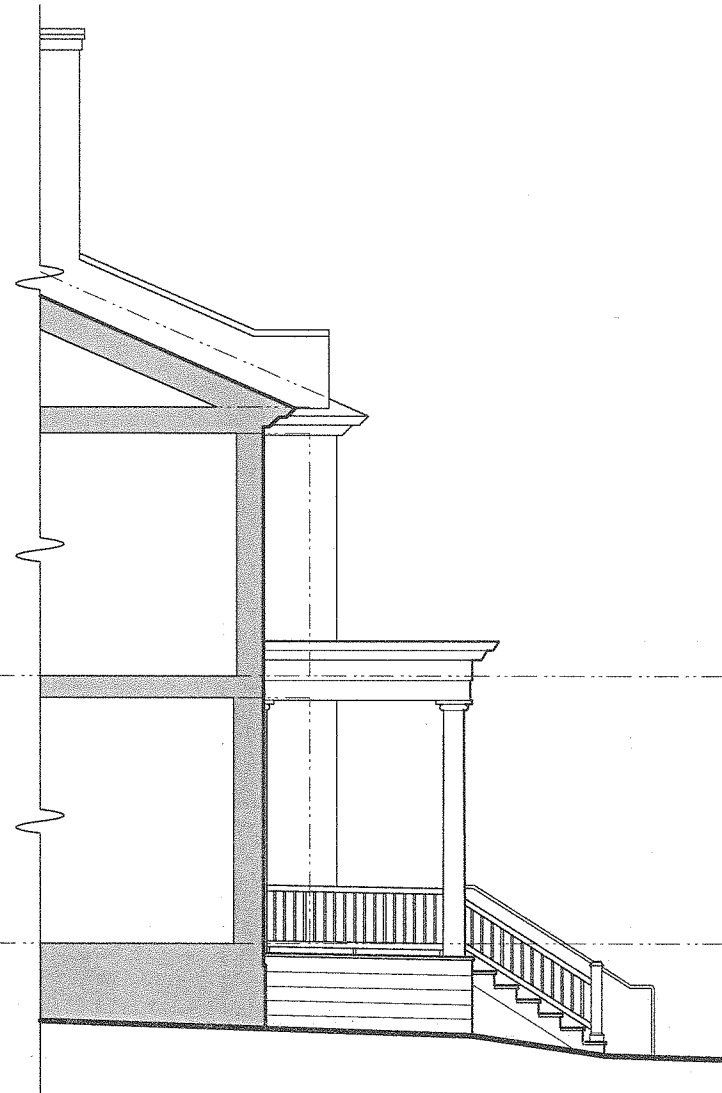
Staff recommendation: Approval for replacement of columns, capitals, porch decking, wood floor structure, wood shiplap apron, newel posts and wood stairs using in-kind material replacement. Approval of new steel handrail; replacement of the porch railing system in a design that respects a traditional rail height while providing the barrier height required by code.







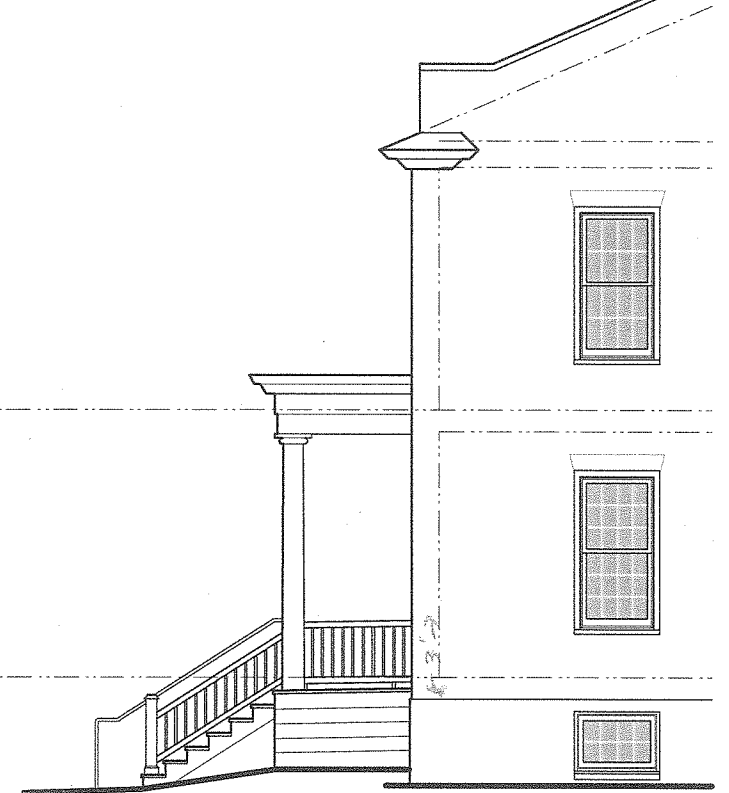
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EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION



EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION

CONVERSE HOME - FRONT PORCH

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

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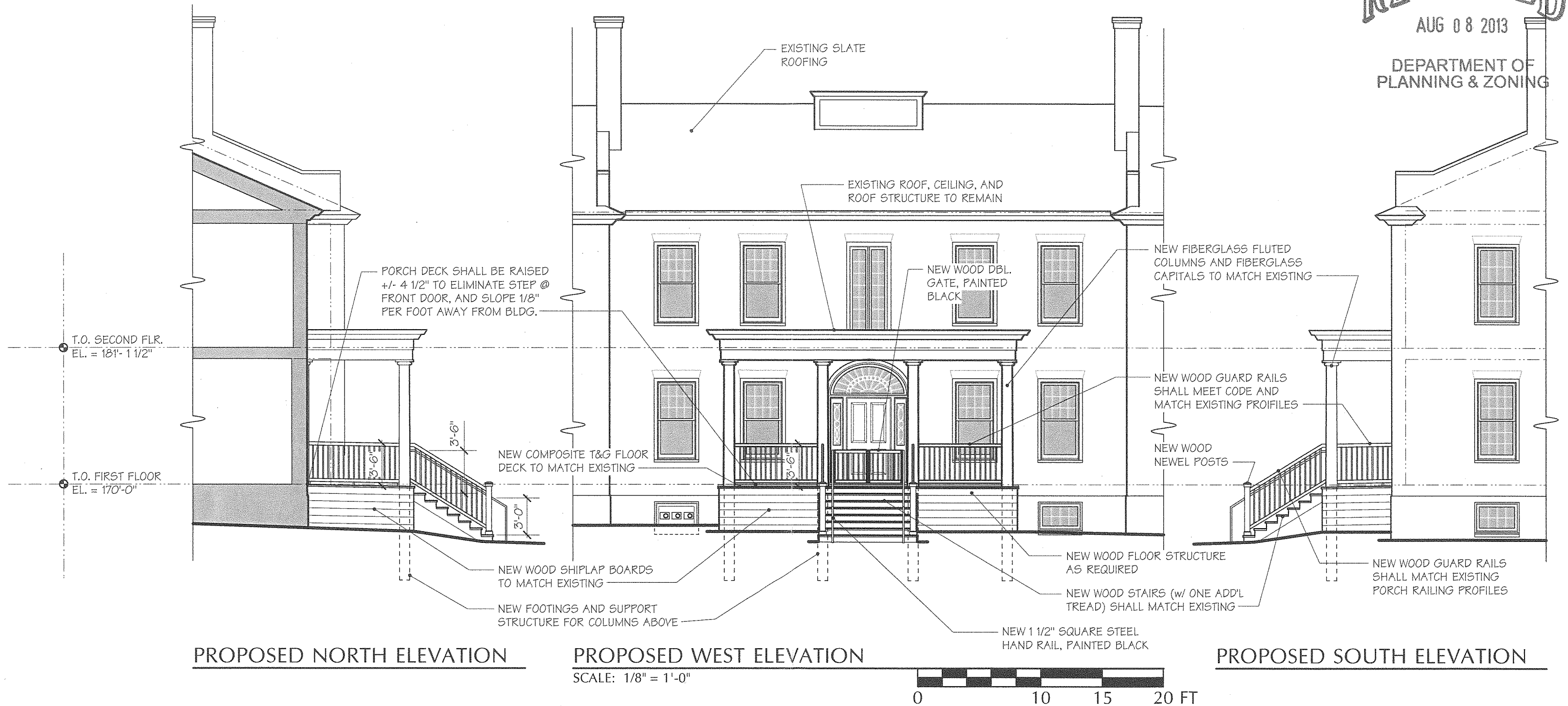
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windows was removed leaving a plain, stepped parapet with concrete coping, trimming the brick, two-story structure's flat roof.

The first story, altered in 1977, has a central entrance, recessed between canted plate glass windows and set below a corrugated aluminum panel. On the second story, symmetrical tripartite windows with upper small panes over a single sash flank smaller 6/1 windows. Openings throughout have wooden sills and a concrete lintel course. Brick pilasters divide the north and south walls between 6/1 sash windows with brick segmental lintels. On the south side is a square, brick, common bond smokestack and flat-roofed, two- and one-story brick additions are attached to the west rear wall.

Attached to the additions is a non-contributing, rear, sprawling complex that includes two holding tanks, a long, one-story freight shed with a loading ramp along its west facade, and a gambrel, small, barn-like appendage sheathed in metal siding.

★ 146. 272 Church Street - Harrington-Hopkins House-Converse House, 1800, 1830-35.

The Converse House is one of the more interesting and historic structures in Burlington. The center of the main building was originally built in c.1800 for William C. Harrington, one of the first lawyers in Burlington. It was a two-story brick house of modest size, and the present fanlight entrance probably dates from then. Harrington moved to Burlington in the late 1780's and, aside from his private practice, was State's Attorney for Chittenden County from 1790-1812. In this capacity he served as prosecutor in the famous trial of Cyrus Dean, one of the smugglers captured in the Black Snake shootout on the Winooski River. Dean was convicted of murder and executed in 1808 - the first and last execution in Chittenden County's history. Harrington was an influential politician and a founder of the Unitarian Church. When he died in 1814, his house was reached by way of Adams Street; the ravine and dense woods caused Church Street to end at Court House Square, leaving the Harrington place isolated on the fringes of the little settlement.

The house was then inhabited by some unknown, but presumably well-to-do Burlingtonian until 1832, when William Henry Hopkins, Burlington's first Episcopal bishop, moved to town and purchased it. Hopkins' most immediate need was a home for himself and his large family, but he also had a dream which he intended to fulfill. He wanted to establish an academy/theological seminary for the purpose of preparing Vermont youths for college and, more importantly, to train Episcopal priests for his diocese. To this end, he immediately built two wings with Federal style parapeted gables. This nearly trebled the size of the building and created what remains as the central part of the existing structure. It was designed to house Hopkins' office, family quarters, and a Gothic chapel (called the Oratory) in the central section. In the north wing were the classrooms and teachers' residences, and the south wing served as the dormitory. About this time, Hopkins published a book on Gothic architecture, beautifully illustrated with his own lithograph drawings. Later he would design and build with his own hands the Institute on Rock Point. This suggests that he was responsible for the design and building of the seminary, even while there is no real evidence of the fact.

In those days, the clergy were by far the most educated group in society. Although public schools and literacy were nearly universal in New England, a liberal higher education was

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unusual; even doctors and lawyers studied with a keen eye toward practical application. In fact, in 1832 Burlington could not count a single one of its youth enrolled in any college anywhere, a situation attributed to the highly profitable commercial trade which attracted all the town's young men into business. As a man of letters, a minister was as concerned with the education of his congregation as with their spiritual well being. A young man of academic promise could expect his minister to patronize him and prepare him for college, where he would probably be taught by an all-clergy faculty. Bishop Hopkins' theological seminary was an excellent example of a church's assumption of responsibility for the liberal education of its young men.

Within a few years, the Vermont Episcopal Institute was serving over 50 students in a building designed for 20. Despite the obvious need for larger quarters, there seems to have been opposition to Hopkins' proposal to expand the building again, particularly from his wife, who knew her husband well. Hopkins was a compulsive builder; several times in his life he went bankrupt for overextending himself in just such a way. Regardless, the seminary was again perhaps tripled in size in 1835 when two huge wings were added. (Actually, two buildings were built on either side of the original structure, and all three were connected by a long, two-story corridor.) The wings were faced with massive porticos of Ionic columns. Hopkins raised the \$10,000 building cost by mortgaging all his personal property. In 1840, the school was forced to close for failure to pay back this debt, and in 1841, the sheriff took everything from the bankrupt Hopkins, including his beloved books.

Hopkins' creditors were now in possession of perhaps the second largest building in Burlington (after the Old Mill), and felt somewhat like the proverbial man who won an elephant in a raffle. They made a sensible move to make their property more functional by razing the connecting corridors and thus leaving three large, separate structures. It was taken over by the Reverend John Converse, pastor of the Congregational Church, as quarters for the Burlington Female Seminary, a finishing school for the daughters of Burlington's merchants. Converse continued to live there when the school folded c.1872; and when he died about 1880, his three unmarried daughters stayed in the big house for many years after. The old south wing was torn down in the 1880's.

Helen C. Converse, the last surviving daughter, was gone in 1920; and the Home for Elderly Women took over the remaining buildings. The present south wing appears to be the old detached north wing, and must have been moved to the other side of the main house and attached to it when the elderly women took over.

The Converse Home, as it is now called, is a privately endowed home for ambulatory and generally healthy women who choose to live in a comfortable group environment. It is administered by an independent, self-perpetuating Board of Trustees, who are empowered by the charter to determine admission; when women enter the Converse Home, they give a negotiated, and usually substantial piece of property to the Home's endowment.

The main common bond brick structure has an eaves-front, 2 x 3 bay, 2½ story mass with a projecting molded cornice and 12/1 sash windows with molded surrounds and brick splayed

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lintels. Centered on the front facade is a Greek Revival porch with fluted Tuscan columns, a plain entablature, fluted pilasters, a balustrade railing and lattice skirt. The porch protects a paneled door below an elliptical transom with radiating tracery and flanked by half-length sidelights with curved tracery and narrow pilaster strips.

On either side of the main block and distinguished by firewall parapet walls with twin chimneys are symmetrical, two-story wings with tripartite, small-paned windows enframed like those on the main structure. Cornice returns and louvered attic windows grace the gable ends. On the north end is a porch similar to the front porch with Tuscan columns, a plain entablature, square baluster railings, fluted pilasters and a lattice skirt. This porch protects a paneled door with a glass transom. An additional door with an in-fill transom is on the south end.

On the southeast corner is a two-story, brick, common bond ell with south end parapet chimneys and an ocular window in the gable peak. It has window fenestration similar to the main block's with plain surrounds and brick splayed lintels. Attached to the ell is a south side, brick, common bond, one-story, flat-roof addition with tripartite windows.

On the northeast rear is a gabled, one-story, brick, common bond ell with 4/8 sash windows on the north facade and glass brick panels on the south side.

146A. Barn, c.1890.

A two-bay, eaves-front, clapboard garage (originally a horse barn) is built into a sloped grade on a high, redstone foundation. A 6/6 sash window with plain surrounds and lip-molded lintels is in a front center wall dormer above overhead garage doors.

147. 244 Church Street, c.1840.

This 2½ story, 3 x 3 bay, brick, common bond Greek Revival style house has had a variety of additions. It rests on a stone foundation and its original gable-front facade is outlined by a projecting, returning box cornice. A lunette attic window details the gable peak. The 6/1 sash windows have molded surrounds, wooden sills and brick splayed lintels. A wraparound porch with Tuscan columns, square spindle railing and lattice skirt protects the altered, double, paneled doors. On the south facade, the porch has a second-story, similarly detailed level. Above the porch is a vertically proportioned Colonial Revival gambrel dormer with a 6/1 sash window topped by an arched transom and flanked by corner pilasters. Also on the south side extends a one-story, shed-roofed, brick, stretcher bond wing with 1/1 sash windows and brick splayed lintels. A second-story enclosed porch is above the wing. To the rear of the wing and the main block is a long, two-story brick wing that includes a short, rear ell. Both appendages are trimmed with a returning box cornice.

On the north facade is a major Colonial Revival addition consisting of a three-story, flat-roof, brick, stretcher bond wing. Spanning the front is a two-story porch with Tuscan columns, a plain entablature, paneled apron and shingled skirt on the second story, and a square baluster railing, and lattice skirt on the ground story. The porch protects 6/1



#146